

Who can claim?

If you think you have one of the four diseases listed below because your job involved working with asbestos or being exposed to asbestos after 4 July 1948, you can claim Disablement Benefit. You do not need to have paid National Insurance contributions.

What are the diseases?

- Pneumoconiosis (asbestosis) - Prescribed Disease D1
- Diffuse mesothelioma - Prescribed Disease D3
- Primary carcinoma of the lung - Prescribed Disease D8 where there is accompanying evidence of one or both of the following:
 - a. asbestosis
 - b. bilateral diffuse pleural thickening
- Bilateral diffuse pleural thickening - Prescribed Disease D9

If your disease is because of a job which you did before 5 July 1948

If your disease is because of a job which you did before 5 July 1948, you cannot get Disablement Benefit. But for the first three diseases listed above you may be able to get an allowance under the Pneumoconiosis, Byssinosis and Miscellaneous Diseases Benefit Scheme. Get leaflet PN 1 *Pneumoconiosis, byssinosis and some other diseases from work before 5 July 1948* from your local Social Security office.

How to claim

Ask your local Social Security office for form BI 100 (PN) and a reply envelope. Fill in the form and return it straight away. The staff at the office will help you if you wish. If you delay your claim you may lose benefit. Look for the address of your local Social Security office in the telephone book under Social Security, Dept of. Your trade union or Citizens Advice Bureau can also help you make your claim.

How your claim is decided

Your jobs

You can claim if you have been working for an employer in any job involving:

- the working or handling of asbestos or any admixture of asbestos;
- or
- the manufacture or repair of asbestos textiles or other articles containing or composed of asbestos;
- or
- the cleaning of any machinery or plant used in any of the above operations and of any chambers, fixtures and appliances for the collection of asbestos dust;
- or
- substantial exposure to the dust arising from any of the above operations.

Your employer will be contacted and if the jobs that you have done do not meet these rules, your claim will be turned down. If you disagree, you can appeal. You will get a letter which will tell you how to appeal.

Medical examination

As soon as possible after your claim is received, you will be examined by a Special Medical Board.

You will be told what out-of-pocket expenses you can claim.

Your medical examination may take place even if enquiries are still being made to see if you meet the work rules, but when these have finished your claim will be turned down if the jobs that you have done do not meet the rules.

The Special Medical Board has to decide:

- whether you have one of the four asbestos related diseases because of your job, and if so
 - which disease
- and
- how disabled you are by the disease.

You can normally only get benefit if you are at least 14 per cent disabled. But if you have pneumoconiosis (asbestosis) (disease D1) or diffuse mesothelioma (disease D3), you can get benefit if your disablement is assessed at one per cent or more.

The Special Medical Board will decide how long your present disablement is likely to last and how disabled they think you are likely to be for that time. The Board may decide how disabled you are for a fixed period of time. If so, towards the end of that period you will be asked to go to the Special Medical Board for another examination to reassess your disablement.

If the Board thinks your disablement is likely to be permanent and the degree of disablement is not likely to change, they may make a final assessment for life.

What happens after your medical examination

Your local Social Security office will write to you. If the Board have decided that you are disabled, the letter will tell you how disabled they think you are, how long they think your disablement will last and how much benefit you will get. If the Board

think that you are not suffering from any of the diseases or you are not disabled by any of them, the letter will tell you so.

If you disagree

If you disagree with the Special Medical Board's decision, you can appeal to a Medical Appeal Tribunal through your local Social Security office.

How you are paid

If you qualify for Disablement Benefit you will get a weekly pension. You will usually be given a book of orders which you can cash every Wednesday at your post office.

How much benefit you get

The current rates of benefit are given in leaflet NI 196 *Social Security benefit rates*. You can get a copy from your local Social Security office.

Disablement Pension is not affected by your earnings or any other income you may have. It is not taxable.

Extra money you can claim

If you can get Disablement Benefit you may also be able to get one of these allowances:

- **Constant Attendance Allowance** - If you are 100 per cent disabled and your disease handicaps you so badly that you need care and attention for most of the time.
- **Exceptionally Severe Disablement Allowance** - If you are very severely disabled and you already have a right to Constant Attendance Allowance at a rate above the normal maximum and you are always likely to need looking after.